**Website Evaluation**

**Another way to make responsible use of the Internet is to use websites that are educational in value. This means that you will need to learn how to evaluate the educational value and the next assignment will show you how to do this.**

***Assignment 3.4***

In this assignment, you will learn to evaluate a website for its educational value. There is much information available on the Internet for use in the classroom. However, some of this information may be inaccurate, biased, or out of date. As a future teacher, you need to know how to determine the credibility, suitability, and reliability of the information on a website before you use it in the classroom. You also need to teach students these same skills. Information and media literacy involves the ability to critically analyze and evaluate information; determine what information is needed; locate, synthesize, evaluate, and use information effectively. Students need these skills so they can learn to manage the mass of available information on the Internet today.

***Instructions:***

**Step 1.** Find an educational website in your grade level and content area that you could use in your future classroom.

**Step 2.** Carefully read the *Criteria for Evaluating the Educational Value of a Website* so you will know what makes for an educationally valuable website.

**Step 3.** Review the *Website Evaluation Rubric* paying close attention to the differences in each of the four levels on each criterion. Use the different levels of criteria on the rubric to evaluate the website.

**Step 4.** Using the *Explanation of Evaluation*, provide a brief explanation of why you judged each criterion as you did. **Note:** Delete the example statements and replace them with your own supporting comments.

Continue with more detailed instructions below…

**Step 1:***Find an educational website in your grade level and content area that you could use in your future classroom.*

#### Step 2: Read about the Criteria for Evaluating the Educational Value of a Website

**1. Authority** – the credibility of the individual(s) or organization that created the website

* 1. Is this individual(s) identified?
  2. Is this individual(s) qualified to publish this material?
  3. Can this individual(s) be contacted?

**2. Bias** – the objectivity and purpose of a website

* 1. Is there a lot of advertising on the website?
  2. Is there an obvious bias related to commercial sales, causes, politics, ethnicity, etc.?
  3. Is it clear what organization supports the website?
  4. Is the website sponsored by a commercial vendor making it clear that the purpose of the website is to sell something to its viewers?

**3. Curriculum Support** – the value of the material to help you teach your curriculum standards

* 1. Does the material on the website support my curriculum standards?
  2. Are the materials that support my curriculum standards easy to find?

**4. Content Accuracy** – the accuracy of the content presented on the site

* 1. Is the content accurate?
  2. Are students likely to form misconceptions based on the presentation of the content?
  3. Are myths presented as facts?
  4. Are you able to verify facts with other reputable sources?

**5. Age Appropriateness** – the suitability of text, illustrations, and content for certain ages of students

* 1. Is the reading level to easy or hard for my students?
  2. Are illustrations too elementary or too sophisticated for my students?
  3. Is the content suitable for my age of students?
  4. Is the site visually appealing for my age of students?
  5. Will the website features keep my age of students engaged?

**6. Currency** – The date the website was last updated or how timely the material is on the website. Keep in mind that not all material goes out of date quickly.

* 1. Is the date when the website was last updated present?
  2. How long ago was the website last updated?
  3. Does the material seem current?

**7. Design** – the visual appeal, ease of use including navigation and organization of material, and inclusion of supporting features such as images or animations.

* 1. Is the website visually appealing for my level of students?
  2. Does the website take too long to load?
  3. Is the website easy to navigate?
  4. Are there too many broken links?
  5. Is the material on the website well organized and easy to find?
  6. Are there too many distracting features on the website to engage students in learning?

**Step 3:** Type your name as Rater, the name of the website, and its URL. Rate your website using the different criteria.

**Rater:**

**Website Name:**

**Website URL:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Level 1** | **Level 2** | **Level 3** | **Level 4** | **Level Assigned** |
| **Authority** | No author or organization is provided. | No author or organization is listed but contact info is provided through email or address. | An author and/or organization is listed but it is still not clear who is the creator of the material or if they have proper credentials to create material. | An author and/or organization is listed making it clear that the author or organization has proper credentials to create the material. |  |
| **Purpose/Bias** | The website contains a great deal of advertising or biased content and/or it is not entirely clear what organization supports the website. | The website contains some advertising or minimal bias and/or it is not entirely clear what organization supports the website. | The website contains some advertising or minimal bias but it is clear that a large reputable organization supports the website. | The website contains no advertising or biased content and it is clear that a reputable organization supports the website. |  |
| **Curriculum Support** | The website material does not support my curriculum standards. | The website material somewhat supports my curriculum standards but the material is difficult to find. | Some website material clearly supports my curriculum standards, but the material is somewhat difficult to find. | The website material clearly supports my curriculum standards and the material is very easy to find. |  |
| **Accuracy of Content** | There are many errors in the content. Myths are presented as facts, or other misinformation is provided. | Some of the content is accurate, but one or two obvious errors were included. | Most of the content is accurate, but there were some areas that were not stated clearly. I need to be sure that students do not misinterpret this content. | The content was totally accurate. No errors, misconceptions, or vague statements that could be easily misinterpreted were present. |  |
| **Age Appropriate-ness** | The reading level of text, illustrations, AND content are not appropriate for my students. | Either the reading level of text, illustrations, OR content are not entirely appropriate for my students but will keep them somewhat engaged in the material. | The reading level of text, illustrations, AND content are appropriate for my students but the website has only a few features that make it less than appealing for my students. Overall, my students will be engaged in the material. | The reading level of text, illustrations, AND content are appropriate for my students. All features make the website appealing for my students and they will be highly engaged in the material. |  |
| **Currency** | There is no date listed when the site was last updated. | The date listed for the last update is over 2 years ago. | The date for the last update is six months to a year old but the material is still current. | The date for the last update is within the last 3 months and the material is current. |  |
| **Design** | The website loads too slow, has too many distracting features, and is not easy to navigate. | The website has at least two difficulties: it loads too slow, has too many distracting features, OR is not easy to navigate. I cannot easily work around these difficult features to engage my students in learning. | The website only has one difficult feature: it loads too slow, has too many distracting features, OR is not easy to navigate. I can easily work around these difficult features to engage my students in learning. | The website loads quickly, has no distracting features, AND is easy to navigate. I can easily use this site to engage my students in learning. |  |
| **Total** | | | | |  |

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#### Step 4: Explanation of Evaluation

**Instructions:** In the table below, explain clearly why you judged each criteria as you did. You should delete the example statements before you type your own.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Level I gave this criteria** | **Explanation** |
| **Authority** | **4** | Well-known who the authority of the site is. |
| **Purpose/Bias** | **4** | The purpose is very clear, to find a person’s ancestors. |
| **Curriculum Support** | **4** | I can use all the information on the website to teach my curriculum standards. |
| **Age Appropriateness** | **4** | Very easy to use, but requires some credit card information. |
| **Currency** | **3** |  |
| **Design** | **4** | Very appealing, and interesting for further use. |

**What will you turn in?**

1. **Step 3:** Website Evaluation Rubric – **completed and saved file**

2. **Step 4:** Explanation of Evaluation - **completed and saved file**

**Note:** Save file and upload to your **Wiki, EDU 248 Files page** for credit.